SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION
APRIL 14, 2005
FINAL MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners in Attendance: George Blomberg, Chair; Steve Sheehy, Vice Chair; Anjali Bhagat, Tom Eanes, Chris Fiori, Martin Kaplan, Valerie Kinast, Lyn Krizanich, John Owen, Joe Quintana, Mimi Sheridan, Tony To

Commissioners Absent: Hilda Blanco, Mahlon Clements, Jerry Finrow, Matthew Kitchen

Commission Staff: Barbara Wilson, Director; Scott Dvorak, Analyst

Guests: Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck; John Rahaim, DPD; Neil Powers, Legislative Aid to CM Steinbrueck; Bob Morgan, Council Central Staff; Kristian Kofed, DPD; Layne Cubell, Seattle Design Commission Staff; Bob Derry.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair George Blomberg and Vice Chair Sheehy were late to the meeting. When a quorum of the Commission was achieved at 3:05 pm Chair Emeritus John Owen called the meeting to order. Chair Emeritus Owen chaired the meeting until Chair Blomberg arrived at 3:25 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Lyn Krizanich moved, and Commissioner Tom Eanes seconded, to approve the March 24, 2005 Commission minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

CHAIR'S REPORT

- **Upcoming Activities**

Chair Emeritus John Owen announced a number of upcoming events particularly noting the following;

- On April 19 there will be a combined Executive Committee Meeting & Center City work session. The Executive Committee will meet from 7:30 - 8:15am then will convene into a Center City work group session from 8:15 - 9:30am.
- On Tuesday, April 19 at 5:30 p.m.there will be a City Council Public Hearing hosted by the Urban Development & Planning Committee on the 2005 Comprehensive Plan Amendments in City Hall Council Chambers.
- The Urban Sustainability Forum continues. The next forum event will be held Tuesday, April 26, 2005, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Seattle City Hall, Bertha Landes Room. It is entitled *Building Healthy Places* and will feature Richard Jackson, MD, MPH, State Public Health Officer, California Dept.of Health Services.

REVIEW & APPROVE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN THRESHOLD RESOLUTION

Executive Director Barbara Wilson reviewed the purpose of the Commission letter stating that traditionally the Planning Commission formally weighs in with Council two times during the annual Comprehensive Plan Update. She noted the SPC weighs in once during the decision about whether each submitted amendment meets the threshold for review and then later on the particular policy merits of each of the amendments. Ms. Wilson reminded the Commission that they are currently reviewing the threshold criteria to decide whether to include amendments in the 2005 review process. She noted that the letter is based on the recommendations from a review by the HNUC committee. She also noted that the industrial lands project team reviewed the amendments and their informal review was congruent with the HNUC recommendations. Chair Emeritus Owen noted that Commissioners were emailed the draft a few days ago to review and asked if anyone had any questions.

ACTION: **Commissioner Sheridan made a motion to approve the letter, Commissioner Eanes seconded. The Planning Commission unanimously approved a letter to Council stating that they generally supports the City staff recommendations determining which proposals should be considered and further analyzed for review in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan amendment process and which should deferred to a later date or reviewed through another planning effort.**

The Commission's letter will emphasize the following points;

1. With regard to the proposed amendments relating to changes to industrial designations, the Commission reiterates that the City should develop an industrial lands strategy that considers the City's overall objectives for maintaining and attracting industrial jobs to the City and its role and opportunities within the regional context. This strategy is critical in making decisions regarding individual requests for zoning changes such as these and should be adopted to guide these decisions. The Planning Commission is working with DPD and other City departments to assist in drafting an Industrial Lands Strategy.

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2. With regard to the proposed amendments dealing with the linkages between the Transportation Strategic Plan and the Transportation Element of the Comp Plan, the Planning Commission is particularly interested in the relationship and connections between the two. A strong linkage between the City's functional transportation plan to its Comprehensive Plan is crucial in order to ensure consistency.

On both of these points the Commission refers Council to the Planning Commission November 24, 2004 Letter to Council regarding the Comprehensive Plan 10-Year Update.

REVIEW & APPROVE COMMISSION LETTER TO PORT OF SEATTLE'S NORTH BAY PROJECT

Chair Emeritus Owen referred Commissioners to the draft letter to the Port of Seattle noting that this letter is in response to the Port briefing on February 24th regarding the Port's proposed changes at North Bay/Terminal 91 and their request for an amendment to Seattle's Comprehensive Plan. He reminded Commissioners that the purpose letter is to thank the Port of Seattle for their presentation on the proposal at T-91. He stated that the intent is to raise questions and preliminary observations but stating that the Commission will continue a dialogue with the Port and others on this matter. The Commission will review the DEIS and other information as it becomes available. The Executive Committee worked with SPC staff to revise the draft letter for approval today.

Commissioner Quintana stated that he generally supported the letter but thought the tone was a bit too certain and should be posed as questions. Commissioners Krizanich and Owen agreed with this sentiment. Commission Sheridan suggested moving the concluding paragraph that details the SPC intent to do further review to the beginning of the letter.

ACTION: Commissioner Quintana motioned, and Commissioner Eanes seconded, revising the letter to the Port responding to their February 24th briefing on proposed changes at North Bay/Terminal 91 and subsequent request for an amendment to Seattle's Comprehensive Plan. The revisions to the letter are aimed at making it clear that the Commission has questions and that their comments are only preliminary. The Commission will continue to review this proposal via the DEIS and other means. The SPC continues to advocate for the development of a City industrial lands strategy that considers the overall objectives for maintaining and attracting industrial jobs to the City and its role and opportunities within the regional context.

NOTE: Commissioner Blomberg excused himself from Commission discussion and action due to a possible conflict of interest.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Chair Emeritus Owen turned the chairship of the meeting over to Chair Blomberg who had arrived during discussion of the previous agenda item. Chair Blomberg thanked Chair Emeritus Owen for his assistance in convening the meeting then asked Executive Director Wilson to update the Commissioners on the 2005 Nominations Committee. Ms. Wilson noted that she had asked Commissioners Owen, Sheridan and To to serve on this year's nominations committee for the 2005- 2006 Leadership team. All have agreed and will be in contact with Commissioners soon. She noted that if Commissioners would take a moment to fill out and send in their leadership forms this will help the nominations committee. The Nominations committee hopes to present a slate of candidates for full Commission approval in May.

PROPOSED REVISED COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Ms. Wilson noted that staff proposed, and the Executive Committee accepted, a new revised committee called the Land Use & Transportation Committee to replace the current Transportation Committee. The new committee will keep its current projects and responsibilities and will also take over the responsibility for Comprehensive Plan review and Industrial Lands Strategy and issues. She noted that a new chair of the committee would be elected with the new 2005-2006 leadership team but that the Executive Committee would appoint a temporary committee chair until that time. The kickoff meeting for this new revised committee will be Thursday, May 19th from 3:30 -5:00 p.m.

COMMISSIONER SPOTLIGHT: JOE QUINTANA

This months spotlight focused on Commissioner Joe Quintana. Commissioner Quintana shared information about himself including his professional and personal background.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

PLANNING DIRECTOR REPORT JOHN RAHAIM

Mr. Rahaim provided his monthly update to the Commission. He began with an update of the Waterfront Planning efforts noting that the staff is continuing its work on the draft concept plan and has schedule its official rollout with final review and approval scheduled for the fall. He also noted that DPD is thinking about how they can complete a final master plan. He is working on a funding strategy and scope of work for next year. He noted that this might include code development, development of an EIS, and design of the surface street. Mr. Rahaim noted that he thought the Planning Commission could help the City on the issue of industrial lands. More specifically, he suggested the SPC look at defining the issues leading to a scope and the key questions that need to be answered. He also noted City staff would need the Commission's technical advice on developing an industrial lands strategy. On the issue of code simplification he suggested that the Planning Commission could play a valuable role in helping DPD staff as they begin to identify the key issues associated with multifamily housing development and what can be dealt with through the code. He noted the goal is to understand the key issues as well as have a direction and scope on this issue by the end of 2005. He then opened up the discussion to the Commission.

Commissioner Blomberg wondered if there was a fuse on the multifamily code development or what the impetus for moving forward on this issue was. Mr. Rahaim noted that it was a priority for the Mayor to simplify and improve Seattle's Land Use Code and it is a major goal of the economic development task force. Commissioner Quintana noted that it has been twenty plus years since there have been a comprehensive review of the Land Use code. Commissioner Sheridan noted that Seattle gets a pretty narrow range of the type of multifamily development that can be built. John Owen stated that the City should strive for better quality multifamily. Mr. Rahaim stated that there is a lot of new townhouse development taking place and that there is some concern about under-developing the land. Some have pointed out that this might be because they are under the threshold for design review and SEPA plus there is a huge demand in the market.

Commissioner Owen suggested to Mr. Rahaim that he look into the PSRC Index modeling and suggested that this would be a good time to ask PSRC to help define questions about the region's industrial lands. Commissioner Sheridan suggested that the City should bring in its own expertise to review and analyze the T-91 and other such proposals since there is so much pressure to convert lands, particularly industrial, to other uses. Commissioner Quintana asked how the city might deal with a change to what uses are considered industrial and what might be a reasonable transition to allow for new technology and new uses. He wondered if it was time for new zones. He also suggested that there are some critical issues that need to be addressed in any conversation including hazardous waste and liability issues.

Commissioner To suggested that one thing that would help with planning is to figure out how to better link funding to implement plans. He stated there is a need for the City to look again at integrating the capitalization and financing side with the planning side.

Chair Blomberg thanked Mr. Rahaim for his monthly update.

COUNCILMEMBER PETER STEINBRUECK 2005 PRIORITIES

Chair Blomberg welcomed Councilmember Steinbrueck to address the Commission with regard to the Council Urban Development and Planning Commission priorities as well as his general priorities as a Councilmember. Council member Steinbrueck thanked the Planning Commission for the opportunity to address them.

Councilmember Steinbrueck noted that he had a copy of the Planning Commission's 2005 work plan and commented that it is very consistent with the Council's UDP committee work plan. He stated he would like to talk about the specific of our work plan but that he would also like to address process, communication and relationship issues. Councilmember Steinbrueck stated he relies heavily on the advice and independent study and analysis of the Planning Commission. Councilmember Steinbrueck stated that he would like to be consulted on the development of the Planning Commission work plan on an annual basis. He stated that he would welcome meeting with the Commission on a more frequent basis in a number of venues

He brought up the issue that departmental work gets fairly far along before Council ever gets to look at it and that as a matter of process the Commission should not assume that the Council has been involved. He noted that in most recent cases the Council gets a finished package and then is criticized for holding up the process if they review it with a critical eye. He stated that he feels

it is of utmost importance that these issues receive due diligence from the Planning Commission and from the City Council.

He specifically noted the development of the Neighborhood Business District Strategy as a recent example and also said the Council may consider unbundling and drafting a new package dealing with the parking separately. He stated he would like the Planning Commission analysis on this issue. He stated that he had questions about whether it should have a uniform application. He suggested he might consider disaggregating the proposal into component parts and consider the parking separately. He noted that the Council would be dealing with parking issues related to rezones in several neighborhoods very soon and that he would like to understand how those changes to parking regulations relate to NBDS.

He noted that the one thing he would like to see added to the SPC work plan is urban sustainability. Commissioner Owen asked for more detail regarding how the Commission could play a role. Councilmember Steinbrueck noted that he would like to see the City consider potential code amendments and to set up an advisory committee to think about incentivizing green building.

He also asked for the Commission's analysis on the Downtown height and density study and noted that he did not know what DPD's process had been recently. Ms. Wilson stated the Commission was recently briefed on the proposal and knew the Staff was finalizing the proposal based on feedback after the release of the preferred alternative and public involvement process. She stated that she thought the plan was for the Mayor to send the final proposal to Council in early May. She also noted that the Planning Commission would be reviewing the proposal at the April 28th Commission meeting to learn about any of the recent changes and that the Commission was planning to provide comment to Council.

Commissioner Sheehy stated that it has been useful in the past when Council can give the Commission more clarity about specific questions it has on some of the more meaty issues like the Downtown Zoning Proposal. Councilmember Steinbrueck replied that he would like the Commission's thoughts on how this proposal relates to the Mayor's Center City Strategy and how well-integrated these two efforts are. He stated he is particularly interested in the housing element and how this proposal helps the city achieve its housing goals. He wondered if the TDR bonus system would result in the achieving any of the City's housing goals. He also noted that workforce housing is a major priority that cannot be achieved through TDR. He asked the Commission to consider the idea of TDR credits being applied more broadly in the Center City in places like South Lake Union.

Councilmember Steinbrueck also stated he would like the Commission to review the response to the SPC Downtown Height and Density DEIS comments and noted he did not feel their questions had been adequately addressed. He noted that the Planning Commission really does have the specific expertise to respond cogently to this proposal and he will give the Commission's recommendations and comments a lot of weight in his review.

Commissioner Fiori asked Councilmember Steinbrueck to clarify his thoughts on housing issues related to the Downtown Zoning proposal stating that it appears to have the effect of producing housing and also has strong support from the King County Housing Consortium. Councilmember Steinbrueck noted that his concern is that this method alone is not adequate for

addressing the Comp Plan goals for housing and that workforce housing has to be addressed in the City's efforts.

Councilmember Steinbrueck outlined a handful of additional issues he had heard about from constituents and stakeholders. He noted there was a concern from King County and PSRC about removing the transfer of rural development credits in Denny Triangle. He stated that some residential communities were concerned about heights and the integrity of historic districts and that he has heard a lot of support for concentrating growth in the core noting that the City should be more liberal with height and density in the core as a way to ensure we are sensitive to neighborhoods and historical areas.

Commissioner Krizanich noted that the current version of the preferred alternative is consistent with the goals of the downtown neighborhood plans and goes a step toward actually implementing them.

Chair Blomberg reiterated Councilmember Steinbrueck's request regarding Commission review of the Downtown Zoning proposal; 1) to review the staff response to the SPC comments on the DEIS, 2) look carefully at how the proposal integrates the broader Center City Strategy and goals, 3) look carefully at housing related issues, specially at workforce housing, and 4) comment on the King County TDC.

Councilmember Steinbrueck brought up a few additional items that he is paying close attention to and would like the Planning Commission to continue to advise the Council. Those issues are the Waterfront Concept plan, an industrial lands strategy and housing issues in Northgate.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Blomberg asked for public comment. Bob Derry, representing the Interbay Neighborhood Association, introduced himself and stated he was in favor of inclusion of the Dravus Interbay area as a Hub Urban Village in the Comp Plan threshold resolution. He urged the Planning Commission to reconsider their conclusion that the proposed amendment did not meet the threshold for review. Commissioner Sheehy thanked Mr. Derry for his comments noting that the Commission would not reconsider their recommendations but if it was ultimately included the Planning Commission would give the proposal its due consideration

ADOURNMENT

Chair Blomberg adjourned the meeting at 5:35 pm.